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ABSTRACT

Described as an "action" document, this guide for the development of high school English programs emphasizes the processes of curriculum development, rather than the product, and strongly advocates local control over curriculum development. Part I suggests the following five-step procedure for developing new curricula and for revising/updating existing curricula: (1) reconnaissance and needs assessment; (2) stating philosophy and essentials of English; (3) English curriculum planning; (4) implementation; and (5) assessment. Part II presents model English curricula based on current thinking about the nature of English studies including an "umbrella" curriculum and three sample English curricula--grade level English, elective English, and thematic English. Comprising half of the guide, Part III provides eleven resources and statements helpful to English curriculum planners: incentives for excellence, curriculum aims, essentials of English, literacy statements for Michigan, English as a second language in the high school English curriculum, a synopsis on minority groups, centers for excellence, questions for curriculum evaluation, selecting instructional materials, MCTE (Michigan Council of Teachers of English) writing awards application, and conditions and strategies for effective curriculum change. (JD)

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HIGH SCHOOL ENGLISH:

A Process for Curriculum Development

The Committee on the High School English Curriculum

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HIGH SCHOOL ENGLISH:
A Process for Curriculum Development

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INTRODUCTION

English teachers all over the United States wish to respond to recent expressions of concern for the quality of secondary education in America, the so-called "excellence" movement. They recognize that parents and students have come to realize that skill in reading, writing, listening, and speaking is absolutely essential to effective functioning in school and society. The various reform reports issued by government agencies and private corporations and writers have been unanimous in recommending a solid four years of high school English.

Yet the reform reports do not describe in sufficient detail what sorts of specific topics should be included within these four years of English/language arts, leaving English teachers to ask some crucial questions: "What skills and knowledge should be included?" "How can such material be realistically incorporated in the English/language arts class?" "How much and what sort of 'grammar' should we teach?" "What is appropriate in high school literature study?" "How can literature be combined with reading?" "How much and what kinds of writing should be included?" "How can writing be linked to oral language skills?" "How can all these skills and subjects be woven into a coherent high school English curriculum?"

To explore such issues the Committee on the High School English Curriculum was established in 1985 and held a series of meetings on the Michigan State University campus. Committee members were chosen from small towns and large cities and from diverse teaching situations, and they brought to the task a wealth of practical teaching experience.

One of the first decisions of the Committee was against attempting to prepare or outline a single English curriculum for all high schools. Aside from the difficulty of suggesting what "ought" to be included in the high school literary education of every child, the Committee was philosophically committed to the concept of local control and local curriculum development. We felt that arguments are powerfully in favor of English curricula developed by local school districts to meet their own particular needs.

At the same time, we realized there is a need on the part of English teachers for guidance as to possible avenues for development of curriculum. Too often, we felt, curriculum matters are settled through the adoption of the most convenient textbook series or via content analysis of currently mandated standardized tests. Although we recognized the need for both textbook use and careful evaluation, we felt that the development of high school English curricula can be enhanced through discussion of current theory and practice of both curriculum development and learning of literacy.

Thus we collected curriculum guides from all over the country to see what English teachers were doing. We reviewed the professional literature in the teaching of English to determine what research suggests in terms of English programs. We gathered numerous statements and guidelines on literacy which have been prepared by state and national professional organizations of teachers of English, speech, and reading.

After considerable discussion, drafting, and editing, we completed a guide to development of high school English programs. In the spirit of current writing theory, we have focused attention on the processes of curriculum development, rather than the product. In Part I of this report, we suggest a five-step procedure for developing new curricula and revising or updating of existing curricula. In Part II, we present model English curricula based on current thinking about the nature of English studies. In Part III, we supply copies of a number of documents and statements that will be helpful to English curriculum planners.

This booklet is an action document, a "how-to" monograph based on the experience of the committee members. If followed, it will lead to English curricula of depth and substance, which we feel will be in keeping with current practices in English teaching and may even lead to discovery of important new directions for English studies. We believe that HIGH SCHOOL ENGLISH: A PROCESS FOR CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT can help promote and extend excellence in the teaching of the English language arts.

Stephen Tchudi, Chair

Acknowledgement

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PART I:

A PROCESS APPROACH TO ENGLISH CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

Introduction to Part I

This portion of the booklet sketches out a five-step process for curriculum development:

1. Reconnaisance and Needs Assessment
2. Stating Philosophy and Aims
3. Curriculum Planning
4. Implementation
5. Evaluation

The members of the Committee on the High School English Curriculum have worked with enough curriculum groups to know that many will want to skip "the preliminaries" and jump directly to stage 3, "Curriculum Planning." We urge groups to resist that temptation and to follow the steps in the order given. Within each section the reader will find a broad description of a theory for curriculum development, plus practical suggestions for action. Obviously local curriculum groups should pick and choose from among the various possibilities. A rapid reading of Part I, followed by blocking out of a curriculum plan might then follow, allowing each district or curriculum group to work out its own, unique curriculum plan.

We suggest establishing two committees for the curriculum development process. The first of these is what we will call the School/Community Committee. It should be made up of a reasonable number of representatives from the school--including English teachers, administrators, and, one hopes, the superintendent--as well as representatives from the community: one or more school board members, plus representatives of parent groups, businesses, and social agenices. The School/Community Committee functions most powerfully at the beginning of the curriculum building process, conducting a survey of community/school needs. However, it should remain intact throughout the curriculum development process and should have a strong hand in the implementation and evaluation of the curriculum.

The second group carries the title of the English Curriculum Committee. It consists primarily of the English teachers, plus a representative or two from the School/Community Committee, and at least one student. The English Curriculum Committee is the specialist group which makes the crucial decisions about aims and objectives, curriculum materials, textbooks, etc. It reports to the School/Community Committee, but it is trusted by that group to develop a professional English program of the highest order.

STEP ONE: RECONNAISANCE AND NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The very first step in the curriculum development process is to establish the School/Community Committee described on the previous pages. Once that group has been created, it meets to discuss the needs of the community. It is crucial that such a discussion not be unduly influenced by media "scare" reports of the literacy crisis or even by events or school systems in the next town. The point of this step is for community members and educators to take a close hard look at their community and to understand more deeply than ever the unique makeup of the community and the people served by its schools.

The Committee should engage in at least two types of study: 1) reconnaissance and 2) needs assessment. These are different in purpose and should be carried out at different points in the planning process. Reconnaissance is broader in scope than needs assessment. It is a wide ranging survey of the population for which the curriculum is intended, the people who will implement and execute the curriculum, and the context in which the curriculum will operate. Programs often do not succeed because of the failure to gather enough information about the populations and contexts they are designed for. Goals and objectives are statements of hope and must be based on knowledge of the present.

Doing the Reconnaissance.

The School/Community Committee should raise the following kinds of questions.

A. Finding out about students: What is it like to be a young person?

   1. What do psychologists have to say about youths and the developmental tasks that face them at various ages?
   2. What do linguists and educators have to say about the resources of language and thought students possess?
   3. What do employers in the community have to say about young people? What do others in the community say?

B. Finding out about the faculty: Who are the teachers?

   1. What do teachers say about themselves and their place within the community?
   2. What conceptions of the subject matter do the teachers have? What theory of literacy do they embrace, for example?
   3. What is the average age and experience of the faculty?

C. Finding out about administrators and support staff: Who will help?

1. What conception of role in the development of curriculum do the administrators have?
2. What resources can the librarians and media specialists bring to the task?
3. What responsibilities are the administrators and support staff willing to assume?

D. Finding out about the community: Where are we?

1. What do community leaders say about the nature of the community in which the school is embedded?
2. What is the future of the community?
3. What resources does the community offer to the school?

This is neither an exhaustive nor exclusive list of questions. Some may not be appropriate and others have undoubtedly been overlooked. The questions listed are intended to point the way toward avoiding a common failing of curriculum design and planning, lack of important background information.

Needs Assessment.

Needs assessment is a process that carries the reconnaissance of the School/Community Committee toward intensive consideration of specific situations. It is an attempt to focus sharply on the status quo and to evaluate it against specific goals and objectives. It is a process of measuring the disparity between stated goals and the present situation. The "needs" element of the assessment is the description of the disparity between the resources available and the resources necessary to accomplishing goals and objectives.

Doing the Assessment.

A. The School/Community Committee might collect data on a number of questions: How well is the district doing? Ask these groups:

1. Parents: by survey questionnaire.
2. Present students: by survey and study of test data.
3. Past students: by survey of education/career choice and success.

B. Study faculty and facilities. What are the resources?

1. Will the staff need further training or re-training?
2. Are the present facilities and materials adequate?
3. Will present class size limits, teacher/student ratios, number of preparations further or prevent successful implementation?

The needs assessment must be done as realistically and concretely as possible. This does not exclude intuition and educated guessing.

Reporting to the Public.

Reconnaissance and needs assessment are important steps in the process. They should not be treated lightly or hastily. Once the School/Community Committee has collected its information and made its judgements, it can present its findings to the general public and to school personnel. Such a report should not engage in extravagant rhetoric or breast-beating discussions of failures; nor should it be complacent about the successes it discovers. Attempts should be made to insure that the report of the committee is reported accurately in the local media and conveyed precisely to interested parents. A public presentation with time for questions might be a useful way to achieve both those aims.

Additional Resources

In Part III, Exhibit A reprints NCTE's leaflet, "Incentives for Excellence," a set of guidelines for school board members and administrators who wish to foster excellence in English programs. The School/Community Committee might also be interested in Exhibit G, NCTE's "Centers of Excellence" program and consider ways of making their district's program an exemplar for others. Exhibit D offers a set of statements on literary programs approved by the various Michigan literacy associations.

STEP TWO: STATING PHILOSOPHY AND ESSENTIALS OF ENGLISH

Once the School/Community Committee has reported, a second group, the English Curriculum Committee, moves into action. This is the group of specialists (plus representatives of the study body and parents) who are best able to make decisions about the content of the English curriculum.

As a first stage, this Committee meets to establish philosophy and global aims for the program. Here again is a phase which all too many curriculum groups ignore. Discussing philosophy and aims is by no means an idealistic or abstract process. It is central to curriculum formation and guides small and large details.

There is no fixed form for a program philosophy or statement of goals. Districts have sometimes done successful one-page descriptions; other statements run to dozens of pages. What matters most is the content of the philosophy and how it has been derived.

The rationale, as stated by the program philosophy, provides for the purpose of supporting the subject content in the school curriculum. It includes a description of its beliefs as to the student's needs and the importance of a subject as a contributing factor to formal education. Any statements should be clear, concise, and targeted to the program of study. This ensures direction and provides for a subject's inclusion in the total curriculum.

In the development of these philosophical statements for programs the Committee should consider the following questions.

--What is the purpose of the program?
--What are the merits of this program that make it better than other ones?
--Should this program stress activities for cooperation, competition, or both?
--Should curricular programs involve controversial issues or only those ideas with an established body of knowledge?
--Should attitudes, basic skills and problem solving strategies be taught?
--Should the curriculum be based on the needs of the local community, expressed needs of students, or society in general?

The philosophy can also include:

--guidelines for curricular planning.
--the roles of the administrator, teacher and student in the learning of English.
--the rationale for instructional procedures.
--the method for the selection of resources.

Position statements may be needed when there is controversy on issues because of a philosophy statement. A common practice is to have the Curriculum Committee develop position statements as a guide to teachers. They are separate and distinct statements from those of philosophy and may be included in the course of study.

Following the philosophy comes a statement of broad or global aims: What do we want our English curriculum to accomplish for all students? The level of specificity of such objectives is a matter of some debate, as is their form--whether they should be phrased in behavioral terms, for example. We feel that at this stage aims should be broad and comprehensive, covering general learnings rather than specific skills.

Additional Resources

In Part II, Exhibits B, C, and D present alternative views of the essentials of English instruction. They are presented as samples for discussion, not as rigid lists for uncritical adoption. However, they seem to us of a form and length that provide good models for statements of broad aim and philosophy.

STEP THREE: ENGLISH CURRICULUM PLANNING

With the sense of mission that the philosophy statement provides and the guidance that the objective statements offer, the English Curriculum Committee must now compare what presently exists with the learning outcomes that are desired. The present curriculum may serve as a foundation for the new curriculum. Perhaps only minor adjustments are needed in the present curriculum. Perhaps major changes are necessary to achieve the desired goals. Possibly the Committee will conclude that the present design must be replaced altogether. By examining present progress in terms of the established objectives and identifying "what works," the Committee can determine the best way of reaching the desired objectives.

Examining the Present Curriculum.

The Committee, then, must raise questions concerning the success of the present curriculum and the impact of this curriculum on future plans. Are the pupils achieving at a satisfactory level all the present curriculum objectives? Is mastery of these present objectives still desirable? In examining the present curriculum, it must be determined if the instructional staff has emphasized and geared instruction toward the achievement of these objectives. In the light of the level of attainment of present goals, what are the outcomes that are now desired? Finally, what will be the response of the community and board of education (as represented by the School/Community Committee) to possible curriculum change?

After the current curriculum is evaluated, the new list of goals and aims must be ranked. A content area analysis may be conducted to decide what is essential, desirable and enriching in the proposed curriculum. Will there be a smooth transition from the present curriculum design to the new model? Do the new goals evolve from and fit with the previously established aims? Will the new goals of the English curriculum be congruent with the established goals of the total school system? Do the goals reflect the expressed concerns and desires of the School/Community Committee?

Designing the New Curriculum.

In the design of the new high shool English curriculum, the approach to the four major areas of English (reading, writing, speaking, and listening) and their sub-areas must reflect a theory of instruction that is based on the knowledge of the development of adolescents and the recent research on language learning. The English language arts curriculum must encompass the wide range of processes of communication rather than the mere basic skills of the four areas. The curriculum design selected should address the following concerns:

Scope and sequence of program
Is the approach to the language arts skills a developmental one? Content material may be organized by the allocation of units of subject matter in the four areas to each grade level, by the arrangement of subject matter and skills activities sequentially according to learning levels of the students, and by the use of thematic units stressing humanistic values and experience.

Breadth of literature
Is the curriculum conducive to the study of different kinds of literature, contemporry works, and a variety of multiethnic and multicultural literary forms?

Practices in teaching language
Does the program's approach to the teaching of language have a direct application to the teaching of writing? Will the curriculum stress the traditional or the descriptive/linguistic view of the study of grammar?

Reading programs
Does the curriculum address the needs of good and poor readers?

Written composition
Is the curriculum's approach to the teaching of writing consistent with recent trends in the teaching of composition? Implementation of the curriculum should address the logistical problems of assigning the number of compositions necessary for students to practice and refine their writing skills.

Speaking and listening
Is there a balance of emphasis on all communication skills?

Mass media
Are students given opportunities to learn how to evaluate critically and use intelligently mass media (newspapers, periodicals, radio, television, and motion pictures)?

Provision for individual student differences
Is the curriculum broad enough to allow for differences in learning styles and speeds? Programs for the gifted and for the slow learners, individualization and groupings, and English as a second language classes may take into consideration the differences present within the student body.

Lifelong literacy
Within the curriculum, is there motivation for further study of the English language arts? Students must be aware of the lifelong importance of using their language effectively and the enjoyment and beauty available to them through the examination of all modes of communcation.

Provision for curriculum evaluation

Does the curriculum design allow for the continuing assessment and evaluation of the curriculum necessary for an evolutionary process of refinement and improvement in the design?

Selection of an actual curriculum pattern is a very difficult task. See Part II for a discussion of an "umbrella" model for an English curriculum and considerations of how such a model can be incorporated into various curriculum patterns. Too often the pattern becomes determined by the mode of organization of the current textbook. Rather, the English Curriculum Committee should examine alternative curricular approaches and choose one that develops the aims and goals of the Committee. Committee members should:

--consider current and possible management models.
--determine how the school organization can implement a new program.
--draw a flow chart or organizational chart to help visualize how information and support will flow.
--look at the school's present structure, facilities, resources, time-allocation, and population and assess their impact on the curriculum.
--examine alternative curricular approaches.
--consider such variables as time, content, pacing, and sequencing.
--contrast the advantages and disadvantages of different models in terms of operational factors.
--select the curriculum approach.
--conduct a content area analysis and map the new curriculum.
--write the curriculum design.
--prepare instructional units.*

Additional Resources

Part III, Exhibit H, offers a series of "Questions for Curriculum Evaluation" that can be used both before and after development of the new curriculum. Exhibit I provides guidelines for selection of instructional materials. Exhibits E and F, both dealing with minority students in the curriculum, should be examined by the English Curriculum Committee at this point. Part I, Step 5, describes further possibilities for curriculum evaluation.

*This stage of curriculum development is beyond the scope of the Committee on High School English. We are here concerned with the broad curriculum design, not the contents of specific teaching units.

STEP FOUR: IMPLEMENTATION

In order for any implementation of change to progress smoothly it is essential that key people from all interest groups (administration, school board, teachers, students, taxpayers, parents) be involved and continue to be involved in the curriculum process from inception to evaluation so that everyone has a stake in the success of the program. Thus members of the School/Community Committee established in Step One of this process should be included in the implementation phase. People cooperate when they feel they have had input. These key people should have been carefully selected at the beginning to include those directly affected, those with the power to make the changes, those who might be resistant to the changes and those who influence administration to make changes. Then both the School/Community and English Curriculum Committees should be set to work, according to their areas of expertise, moving the new curriculum program successfully into the schools.

Innovations are very vulnerable at the project stage and those involved need to feel a sense of movement toward long-range focused goals and to believe in the reality of the new program. However, there are no quick fixes in education, because change is a process, not an event. Most major changes in curriculum will require two to five year implementation in stages. Therefore, it is important to create steps to reach the ultimate goal.

To develop specific actions for the implementation of the curriculum design, ask the following question:

What has to happen for this curriculum design to be implemented?

The answers should produce a series of steps needed for implementation. Order the steps by deciding which changes should be implemented when and how to go about each. Create a calendar for the academic changes and stick to it as closely as possible. Keep the involved people aware of progress. The staff needs to feel that the changes will become reality.

For each of the steps created above, then ask the following:

1. What are the factors helping or supporting this change? How can these be strengthened?
2. What are the obstacles in the way of this change? How can these be diminished?

One of the most important steps will involve evaluation of old and selection of new resource materials. Remember to take stock of available human resources also.

Other crucial keys to effective implementation are to

1. Budget an adequate yearly amount to maintain, evaluate, and update curriculum on a regular cyclical basis, with teacher input as to how money is spent.

2. Make the board, community and staff aware of the philosophy and current research behind proposed changes and how they will augment student learning.
3. Include staff in setting goals and objectives that are clearly stated and focused and broadcast to help create a unified effort and an atmosphere of high expectation for success.
4. Provide a curriculum coordinator to coordinate staff development, collect resources, trouble shoot, evaluate, assess, maintain program continuity, update programs, etc.
5. Fund teachers and/or give release time regularly to work on curriculum, attend inservice and regroup for change.
6. Provide a strong, effective, supportive, forward-looking principal.
7. Provide effective, extended, quality inservice and follow up to train staff for needed change. (Often an outside resource person will provide necessary initial impetus and can train selected administrators and teachers from various buildings who can then go back to create needed inservice for the whole staff.
8. Encourage committee members to talk about progress with and gather input from their respective groups often so everyone feels informed.
9. Keep all involved or effected staff members informed of the changes that are being proposed, when they are scheduled to be implemented, how each will be effected (what specific roles each will be expected to play), and how each step leads toward the ultimate focused long-term goal.
10. Schedule public hearings at various points in the process for proper approval, information and orientation of parents, students and other interested community members.
11. Provide appropriate rewards for staff input, participation and utilization of new programs.
12. Create an effective means of evaluation and assessment to be used on a regular basis to assess whether the changes are filling needs. (See Step Five for specifics.)
13. Realize that no single person can make effective changes alone.

Additional Resource

See Part III, Exhibit H, "Conditions and Strategies for Effective Curriculum Change."

STEP FIVE: ASSESSMENT

Once a new English curriculum is in place, teachers, parents, and administrators tend to assess it with "two-value" or "binary" thinking: either it "works" or "doesn't work." Often, wholesale rejection of a curriculum results, as has happened in many high schools where the elective curricula of the 1970s have vanished without a trace. In reality, all curricula "work" to some degree and "fail" in other respects. Instead of regarding a new English curriculum as a monolith for acceptance or rejection, curriculum planning groups should see the program as multidimensional and assess it accordingly. In particular, groups should avoid using standardized test scores (SAT, ACT, MAEP and others) as a single measure of curriculum merit. Current educational research implies that the best assessment of a curriculum involves multiple measures, both "objective" and "subjective" as a means of determining areas of success and needed change. A curriculum study group should consider including as many of the following kinds of measures as possible in constructing an assessment program.

Curriculum Assessment Measures

Writing Portfolios. Collections of students' writing over one year or several years provide an excellent indication of the strength of an English program. Portfolios can be assessed for quantity of writing as well as quality, including the range of discourse forms, evidence of students' voice in writing, even spelling, usage, and mechanics.

Reading Records. On an index card or inside a writing file folder students maintain lists of their required and independent reading, thus providing a measure of how much reading the English curriculum promotes and of its diversity and patterns of growth.

Teacher Journals. Anecdotal records and day-by-day assessments of how new units of lessons seem to work or of the joys and frustrations of a new curriculum can be a powerful tool for use in assessing and revising a curriculum. From time to time, teachers can review their journals and list key points, issues, or problems for staff discussion.

Student Journals. Students are remarkably perceptive about changes from an old curriculum to a new one. They can be asked to keep journals or learning logs assessing not only what they are learning by how successful the new curriculum is in presenting it.

Conferences:

Student/Teacher--held once each term or more frequently to assess specifically how the student perceives the curriculum as affecting his/her learning.

Teacher/Parent--conducted through parent/teacher nights, or, better with members of the community selected at random at regular intervals.

Teacher/Staff--once each term (or more frequently immediately following the implementation of the curriculum) to convey assessments of success and failure in a new program and to apprise administrators of needed support.

Questionnaires (carefully designed in consultation with an experienced psychometrician, pilot tested with small groups prior to mass administration):

Students:

Course or unit evaluation. Such evaluation instruments can be standardized for a school or district or developed by individual teachers for specific classes. Instruments work best if they include both multiple choice or short answer items and opportunities for students to express concerns at length in writing.

Attitudes toward literacy and learning. A major measure of the success of an English program is whether it leaves students feeling positively about themselves as language learners and about the uses of language in their lives. For an especially good set of literacy attitude scales, see Daniel Fader and Morton Shavitz, HOOKED ON BOOKS (Berkeley, 1976).

The total curriculum. Do students see the purposes of the program? Do they understand the connections from one class to another? Do they feel positively about the new curriculum?

Parents (to be approached with great care; poorly designed parent questionnaires usually are destructive to progress):

Perception of the curriculum. Do parents understand the program? Do they see its aims and purposes?

Perception of students' performance. What is their impression of what students are doing in English class (and with English assignments outside the school)?

Perception of how the curriculum meets student needs. Do parents see the curriculum as directed toward the literacy needs of their children, both for purposes of school or higher education?

Teachers:

Standardized unit or course assessments. Virtually all components of the new program should be systematically assessed by the experts who teach in it. Most of the items listed above for parents and students are a teacher concern as well.

Teacher attitudes and concerns. No curriculum can succeed if a high percentage of the faculty doesn't approve of it.

Needed support. Teachers should regularly be asked to report their needs for materials and supplies as well as in-service or consultant help.

Indirect Measures. Library circulation may be an indication of English curriculum effectiveness. So may such phenomena as increased participation in school writing clubs or literary magazines or local or national writing contests.

Checklists or Observation Schedules. Any curriculum generates lists of goals, objectives, activities, etc. Checklists designed for specific courses or units or the entire program are simple devices to discover whether or not a curriculum is doing what it says it will do.

Standardized Tests. Much has been written about the negative values and effects of nationally standardized tests. Any curriculum planning group should review Bannesh Hoffman's classic, THE TYRANNY OF TESTING (Collier, 1974) before considering the use of such tests as a measure of curriculum. If standardized test data are used, they should be carefully qualified to apply to only those aspects of the curriculum which are directly measured. (For example, the SAT is a measure of verbal aptitude that is taken only by college-bound students; it is no measure of achievement of a school system.)

Alternatives to the Standardized Test. Despite the weaknesses of standardized tests, many communities, school boards and administrators, and teachers want to be able to apply numbers to determine the partial success or failure of a program. Alternative forms of assessment can be developed by individual teachers and school districts for the assessment of growth. These may include pre- and post-tests using such devices as:

Criterion-Referenced Tests.
Performance Mastery.
Holistic Scoring.
Analytic Scales.

For more discussion of these measures, see Charles Cooper's MEASURING GROWTH IN ENGLISH (NCTE, 1974).

Using Assessment Data

No English curriculum would ever need to employ all the assessment instruments listed here (or myriad others described in educational literature). The English Curriculum Committee should select a reasonable mix of measures, probably some that are highly subjective (journals and conferences), some which involve both opinion and "hard" data (questionnaires), and some which create hard data exclusively (standardized tests or school-created alternatives). A good assessment program will also collect data from all the participants in the educational process: parents, board members, administrators, teachers, students, and even alumni.

Particularly in the early stages of curriculum implementation, the English Curriculum Committee and School/Community Committee should meet to assess the assessment process itself, to determine what sorts of information is being created and what is needed, and to make judgements about the program.

Most important is to note, again, that the best, multidimensional assessment will not generally lead to a simplistic "yes-no" evaluation. It will assess the many aspects of a program's strengths and weaknesses. A well designed evaluation package is not something teachers need perceive as "busy work" or as an imposition by outsiders. Virtually all of the assessment measures listed here are important because they can ultimately lead a teacher to direct improvement in instruction.

Additional Resources

Good curricula deserve to be recognized. Both the Michigan Council of Teachers of English and the National Council of Teachers of English have developed programs to identify exemplary curricula. See Part III, Exhibits G and J. Other state affiliates of NCTE are also in the process of developing such programs.

PART II:

MODEL HIGH SCHOOL ENGLISH CURRICULA

An "Umbrella" Curriculum for High School English.

It would not be in the spirit of this set of guidelines to propose a curriculum to be required, mandated, or adopted uncritically in high schools. Nevertheless, it seemed useful to us to provide a general model showing how the diverse aims, goals, and activities that traditionally fall under the rubric of "English" can be presented in a curriculum design that is consistent with the best current thinking and research in the field.

To that end, we surveyed numerous curriculum guides from small and large schools, rural and urban, and we factored in our own experiences in curriculum planning groups and as teachers of English in diverse secondary schools. Further, we reviewed the current literature on English curriculum design and development.

The result is the broad or "umbrella" curriculum presented on the following pages. The umbrella takes as its center of focus a concern for THE USES OF ENGLISH, recognizing that for students, educators, and taxpayers, the practical outcomes of an English program are of greatest interest. However, the curriculum recognizes that language study cannot simply be reduced to a series of fuctional or survival skills; nor can critical inquiry and examination be separated from subjective and aesthetic experience. Thus the curriculum provides for both the immediately practical and long-range and lifetime learnings.

The curriculum is developmental, drawing especially on the works of James Moffett, James Britton, and Robert Carlsen. It sees the first year of the high school English program focusing on the THE PERSONAL USES OF LANGUAGE, strengthening students' individual language skills before expanding the dimensions of their universe of discourse to include THE INTERPERSONAL USES OF LANGUAGE in the second year. In the third and fourth years, the focus is on the uses of LANGUAGE IN CULTURE and LANGUAGE IN SOCIETY, broadening student's literary horizons while providing them with the practical language skills needed for survival and success in today's world.

[In three-year high schools, the concerns of both the third and fourth years can be combined in a single, final year of study.]

The umbrella curriculum is designed to be adapted to the needs of individual schools after they have completed the reconnaisance, statement of philosophy and aims, and preliminary curriculum planning as described in Part I of this monograph.

Within each year suggested or representative activities are suggested for:

Reading and literature
Writing
Listening/speaking
Language (including "grammar")

"Critical thinking" is a complex of skills taught in all the language arts, but the focus on thinking skills is presented as part of the broad outline and rationale for the year's theme.

First
Year: THE PERSONAL USES OF LANGUAGE

Rationale: Language, experience, and thinking are inextricably intertwined. The first year's work in many high schools is already given over to introductory or orientation work. The Committee suggests that such work is best approached by recognizing the need for first year students to become confident in their use of language in their academic and outside lives. As students become users of language for personal expression, they lay the foundation for more advanced work in the high school.

Suggested emphases:

Literature and Reading--developing confidence in one's own response to literature through broad and catholic reading; initiation of individualized or independent reading programs; learning to adapt reading skills to literary, textbook, and popular materials; informal literary criticism through reading journals or logs; initiation of a four- (or three-) year reading record card.

Writing--establishing personal voice through personal journal and diary keeping; learning the stages of the writing process; developing ability to edit one's own writing; using writing for personal satisfaction; emphasis on narrative and descriptive writing (storytelling); learning basic school writing forms--notetaking, transcription, abstracting, summarizing, paraphrasing.

Listening and Speaking--developing skills in classroom discussion and talk; seeing personal writing as an outgrowth of talk; oral responses to literature; expressing personal opinions and concerns; following basic school directions; developing skill at reading personal literary selections aloud.

Language--seeing how language affects one's day to day living; review of basic grammar and usage as editing skills; basic learning of how language means, where dialects come from.

Second Year: THE INTERPERSONAL USES OF LANGUAGE

In the second year, students are ready to move beyond the personal uses of language to make connections more consciously with other people. Critical thinking/language skills thus focus on understanding others' perceptions as well as one's own. Students can also broaden the range of their reading and writing to include increasingly abstract issues and problems.

Suggested emphases:

Literature and reading--literature seen as a model of human interaction and engagement (a topic which can be meshed with the traditional second-year focus on American literature in many high schools); learning to understand and respect the literary responses of others; understanding of the concept of genre in literature; writing of short critical responses to reading; development of broader tastes and interests through individualized independent reading.

Writing--focus on shared writing, peer editing, consideration of audiences; enhanced skills at responding to the writing of others; increased precision in public writing, both content and mechanics; writing in a broader range of registers and modes for audiences increasingly removed from the student.

Listening and Speaking--emphasis on mastery of small group process; discriminating listening; joining in formal panels and debates; recreating literature dramatically through oral reading; attending plays and serving as an audience.

Language--increased awareness of the effects of language use on audiences (including the effects of "bad grammar"); focus on semantics and why discussions go astray; analysis of public language and its effects on readers/listeners.

Third
Year: LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

Rationale: The next step beyond making contact with others through language (interpersonal uses) is recognizing that our very culture is embedded in language. Critical thinking and analysis of language leads the student to see his/her "cultural heritage," to analyze that heritage carefully, to think about his/her role in the culture. Such a focus also invites the traditional analysis and evaluation of "classic" literature, but does so by relating "older" literary works to present cultural concerns.

Literature and reading--literature as a major source of culture (this concern might be explored through American, British, or world literatures or through mixtures of literatures in thematic/topical courses); literature to understand enduring problems and feelings; nonfiction reading in issues and problems facing contemporary and historical societies; independent reading in historical literature; understanding of the elements and conventions of literature as they have evolved over time.

Writing--increased writing for audiences beyond the classroom; writing to understand one's culture and community; exploration of writing as a way of knowing and coming to understand; writing of critical reviews and commentaries; stress on writing modes of exposition and explanation.

Listening and Speaking--increased use of language in formal situations: speeches, panels, debates, committee deliberations; listening to formal language and responding to it; use of reader's theater as a way of dramatizing literature; in-depth discussions of problems, values, and culture as expressed in literature.

Language--appreciation of style in language; analysis of literature through its language; refining and polishing of public language in writing; developing skill in formal language registers; coming to understand language differences across cultures and across time through literature.

Note: In three-year high schools, this year's emphasis can be meshed with that of the fourth year.

Fourth
Year: LANGUAGE AND SOCIETY

Rationale: The final year of the high school presents unique problems. On the one hand, students need practical language skills for what comes next: jobs, higher education, independence. On the other hand, they are at a point intellectually where they are quite capable of looking beyond immediate and practical themes. The focus on LANGUAGE AND SOCIETY combines these concerns. Students think critically about issues, problems, and concerns in society and examine them through reading, writing, listening, and speaking. At the same time, the curriculum makes clear that society is something in which the students are about to become full-fledged members.

Literature and Reading--Through British, American, and/or world literatures students see societal problems reflected in their own age and others; literature as a social force; literature as the embodiment of social values; reading of popular nonfiction on current issues and concerns; learning about research techniques for finding information about current and past problems; strong emphasis on reading as a "lifetime habit."

Writing--exploring the full range of discourse, from highly personal to abstract writing of research, theory, generalization; writing as a social force and as a means to citizen action; writing to inform, persuade, entertain, transact business; writing in the disciplines; review of writing "survival strategies" for the real world.

Listening and Speaking--study of language as a social phenomenon, social stratifier; the use and misuse of language in society; production of the full range of spoken English forms, from orderly conversation to public address.

Language--one last look at correctness, its origins, its effects; analysis of the social values and effects of language; propaganda analysis; study of political language, legal language; study of the process of change in language; preparation for a lifetime of language consciousness.

Sample English Curricula

The three curricula which follow are drawn from programs which exist in high schools in Michigan and elsewhere and show how the umbrella curriculum described on the preceding pages can be implemented in schools of varying sizes and needs.

1. Grade Level English

After the considerable interest in elective programs in the 1970s, the grade level English course, frequently divided into two semester courses, appears to be the major pattern for high school English programs. Unfortunately, many grade level English courses are subject to a potpourri approach which does not foster integration of the reading, writing, listening, speaking. The umbrella curriculum offers direction and perspective on grade level English.

1st Year: The Personal Uses of English. A freshman literature anthology, if adopted, often provides a general overview of literary themes and genres. It can be used naturally to invoke personal responses to literature, which can flow into personal writings about experience and reading. Language study is integrated by focusing on teaching students the essence of the writing process, including taking personal responsibility for editing and proofreading.

2nd Year: The Interpersonal Uses of English. Often American literature provides the central focus for the second year of high school English. It connects nicely with the interpersonal uses of language focus by providing students with examples, through literature, of the evolution of American literature, politics, and society through the give-and-take of interpersonal communication.*

3rd and 4th Years: Language and Culture, Language and Society. These two themes lend themselves to exploration through world and British literature, the customary mainstays of junior and senior English in high school.**

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*In schools which do not take an historical/national approach to literature, the topics of the umbrella curriculum lend themselves to increasingly broad and sophisticated reading, moving from literature written primarily for young people, to the full sprectrum of adult literature.

**Naturally the content of year-long English courses is to be adapted to the needs and abilities of individual students. The umbrella curriculum does not prescribe readings.

2. Elective English

Elective curricula have declined in numbers in recent years. However, electives still provide many advantages as a curriculum pattern, since they provide students with a degree of choice in what they take. One of the weaknesses of the elective programs of the '70s was their hodge-podge or smorgasbord nature, which led to a dissolution of common learnings. The umbrella curriculum shows how courses can be clustered by grade levels to insure common learnings for students at a variety of ability levels and with a variety of interests.

1st Year: The Personal Uses of Language (electives)

Fundamental English	Writing Lab
Creative Writing	Individualized Reading
Exploring Through Reading	Reading Techniques
Basic Speaking	Discussion Techniques
Themes in Literature	Genre in Literature

2nd Year: The Interpersonal Uses of Language (electives)

Writing and Our World	Introductory Journalism
Creative Writing	Intermediate Writing
American Literature Survey	Theme in American Literature
Individualized Reading	Mass Media
Public Speaking	General Semantics

3rd and 4th Years: Language, Culture, and Society (electives)

Journalism	Yearbook
Expository Writing	Creative Writing
World Literature	British Literature
Modern Literature	Mythology
Heroic Literature	Shakespeare
Poetry	Radio/TV
Individualized Reading	Theater Arts
Art of the Cinema	Advanced Placement English

Notes: Obviously, patterns of electives will differ depending on staff interests and student needs. The array of courses shown above attempts to provide instruction for a variety of students. With any elective system, skillful counseling is needed. Electives should not be allowed to become monuments to special interest groups or to teachers who have particular academic specialities.

3. Thematic English

In some high schools, teaching by themes has come to be seen as a reasonable middle ground between grade level English and electives. Generally teachers choose to teach and/or students choose to study a variety of topics related to the central focus for the year. Considerable choice is thus provided, while the English curriculum holds on to some common learnings for all students.

1st Year: The Personal Uses of Language (themes)

Identity/Self Fulfillment	Search for Values
What's in My Name?	Venture into Oneself
School Days	Quests
Who Am I Now?	Making Decisions
What Am I Good For?	Coping with Change

2nd Year: Interpersonal Uses of Language (themes)

Family and Friends	Alienation
Conflicts	Interpersonal Relations
Wills in Conflict	Choice and Consequence
Foibles	Influences
My Generation	Negotiation

3rd Year: Language and Culture (themes)

Mythological Heroes	Folk Heroes
Popular Heroes	Media and Modern Man
Struggle for Justice	Struggle for Values
Understanding the World	War and Peace
Culture and Community	The Global Village

4th Year: Language and Society (themes)

Challenges	Communication
Facing Reality	Freedom and Responsibility
Man and Nature	Man and Society
Critics of Society	Job and College
Futurism	Rights and Responsibilities

4. Other Curriculum Patterns

Other types of curriculum pattern which can mesh with the umbrella curriculum include:

Humanities	Interdisciplinary
Real-World Centered	Chronological
Language Across the Curriculum	

We leave it to the readers of this document to consider and explore the potential of the patterns for coherent curriculum development.

PART III:

RESOURCES AND STATEMENTS FOR CURRICULUM PLANNERS

Exhibit A

INCENTIVES FOR EXCELLENCE

What School Board Members Can Do to Encourage Excellence in Their English Language Arts Programs

National Council of Teachers of English

What School Board Members Can Do

1. Declare that high skills in the uses of English is a priority in the school district.

Many students and many teachers perceive that all the subjects, somehow, are equal in importance. They are not. Competence in the use of language--reading, writing, listening, and speaking--is the basis for all other learning. A subject is not fully known until the learner can talk or write about it in his or her own words. A principal cause of failure of college students and young people in the workplace is inability to handle language effectively. Almost invariably, achievement in life is accomplished by high achievement in language.

It follows that all teachers of all subjects have major responsibility to foster growth in language skills. While the English language arts teacher is a specialist trained to show students how to read, write, listen, and speak, all other teachers must share in the task. Studies have shown that, outside of English classes, most teachers are not fulfilling their responsibility to foster growth in language skill.

The school board can take the most important and necessary first step toward excellence in English by declaring that development of high skill in the uses of English is a priority in the school district. At the same time the board can declare that all teachers must help achieve this first priority.

2. Find ways to reduce the size of classes in which composition is taught.

The teaching of writing is the great unfinished work of American education. Under present conditions, it is not possible for all students to learn to write well nor is it possible to teach writing as well as teachers know how to teach it. In High School, the report of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, Ernest L. Boyer, former U. S. Commissioner of Education wrote:

> "The most frequent reason given for the failure to teach writing is the extraordinary demands it places on the teacher's time. Today most English teachers meet five classes daily, with 25 to 30 students each. If the teacher gives one writing assignment every week to each student, he or she spends, at a minimum, more than 20 hours correcting papers."

For nearly fifty years, the National Council of Teachers of English has advocated that composition classes have no more than 25 students and that teachers have no more than four such classes. Similarly, at the elementary school, where the most fundamental work of all occurs in the teaching of writing, NCTE advocates no more than 25 students per classroom. Students must learn to write by writing, and their efforts to express themselves need and deserve the careful attention of their teachers.

These class size standards are important not because they benefit English language arts teachers, but because they make it possible to teach written composition so that <u>all</u> students can become competent and confident writers.

3. Establish a climate and provide the means for professional development of English language arts teachers.

With very modest expenditure, school boards can stimulate their English language arts teachers to become continuing learners. Teachers want professional growth for themselves and their colleagues. Among the possible activities by which school boards can encourage professional growth are these:

a. Provide effective inservice programming, particularly for subject-specific workshops, using local teacher talent as well as outside speakers of the teachers' choice.

b. Set up a travel fund so that numbers of teachers can receive at least partial support to attend state and national professional meetings.

c. Pay fees for teachers who wish to subscribe to professional journals of English language arts associations, state and national.

d. Develop a continuing education fund so that within a five-year period all teachers can return to summer school with district support for study of English and related disciplines.

e. Establish a system of part- or full-paid sabbaticals to permit teachers to undertake university study.

4. Provide services and facilities which will support the teaching of English language arts.

Effective teaching is hard work, and too much of that precious ingredient--time--is spent in getting to needed resources and materials or even in finding a place to plan and think. School boards can help by seeing that English language arts teachers have time, space, and resources to work efficiently and effectively.

a. Retain one or more district-wide consultants to foster professional growth, coordination of curriculum, and acquisition and use of professional materials.

b. In secondary schools, designate strong teachers as department heads and give them time to help other teachers.

c. Provide language arts workrooms to hold professional library, files of language arts-related materials, and copying equipment.

d. Provide clerical assistance to English language arts teachers so they can spend more time working with students.

e. Provide elementary teachers with an hour of planning time each day.

f. Seek PTA or business funds to allow each English language arts teacher at least $50 per year for needed materials and books.

5. Recognize achievements of students and teachers.

The least costly but nonetheless important change in school practice is providing encouragement to teachers and students for work well done. Teachers increasingly feel that school board members and administrators don't care about the achievements of teachers and students. School boards can do a great deal to improve the psychological climate in which teachers work.

a. Through such means as honors assemblies, make full note of achievements of students who excel, such as those who are declared winners in the NCTE Achievement Awards in Writing Program, winners of local writing contests, or those who excel in speech and drama activities.

b. Establish ways to alert the press to achievements of students and teachers.

c. Create policies which support the professional activities of English language arts teachers in regional, state, and national associations.

d. Send personal notes to teachers and students who have achieved personal distinction.

e. Encourage creation of school or department newsletters so that news of the English language arts program can be delivered to the community.

f. Support establishment and continuation of student publications, such as literary magazines and poetry collections.

g. Set aside time on the board agenda to hear in detail about the progress and problems of the English language arts program.

NCTE will be grateful if school board members will welcome the study of these incentives for excellence as a beginning point in a local review of policies affecting the professional lives of English teachers. These suggestions have one ultimate goal: improved learning and teaching of the English language arts. There is no other prupose, and there is nothing more important for your schools.

Exhibit B

Goals and Objectives for High School English

The Committee on the High School English Curriculum

The following statements are not meant to be definitive. They show the results of one group's wrestling with the question, "What ought to be the result of a good high school English curriculum?" Each curriculum group should develop its own statements (see Part I, Step Two). These may provide fuel for discussion and debate.

1. Language:

Premises:

In studying language, it is important to have a basic knowledge of its development and use. Focus on long continual change helps the student use it more effectively. Language is the basis of all learning. The following premises can serve as a basis for curriculum:

1. Language survives because it changes.
2. Changes in usage are shaped by our social, cultural, geographical differences.
3. Students should recognize language as a powerful tool influenced by context.
4. Grammar provides a framework for language, but necessarily a structure for teaching.

Goal:

The study of language is necessary to develop informed, thinking citizens find a self identity through their knowledge and experiences so that they are able to express their hopes and feelings.

Objectives:

Students should be able to:

--learn how English language has developed and recognize that it is always in constant change.
--recognize that the varieties of English usage are the gifts of our historical heritage taken and molded from many various languages and cultures.
--recognize that language is a powerful tool for thinking and learning.
--be aware of the role grammar plays in the orderliness of language and meaningful communication.

--adapt the context, topic, purpose, audience to the influences of structure and the usage of language.
--recognize how language unites the people of a country through its influences.

2. Literature:

Premises:

Literature not only represents one of the primary means by which a culture expresses itself, but broadens students' insights into the world around them. Through the study of literature, students should appreciate literature as reflecting human experience and relate to it gaining insight into the world around them and others. Students should also recognize the many diverse backgrounds and transitions of important writers and literary masterpieces.

Goal:

Literature appreciation expands a student's sense of personal awareness.

Objectives:

Students should be able to:

--relate literature to human experiences.
--gain insight and identify with literature content.
--become acquainted with writers of literature.
--become familiar with classics of known literature.
--express literature through speech and written works.
--appreciate the components and the beauty of literature.
--acquire lifelong reading habits.

3. Communications Skills:
(Reading, Writing, Speaking, Listening, Media Use.)

Premises:

Communication skills involve an active use of language allowing students to participate in their evolving society.

Goal (Reading):

The communication skill of reading is necessary to prepare the student for life long leisure and responsible communication.

Objectives (Reading):

Students should be able to:

--recognize reading as a means of acquiring knowledge as well as a pleasurable activity.
--seek meaning through reading.
--become competent in reading and understand what is read.
--interpret and read accurately.
--critique literature for personal needs and respond to the quality of the material.

Goal (Writing):

Students should be exposed to and participate in a variety of creative and expository modes of writing.

Objectives (Writing):

Students should be able to:

--write with honesty and clarity.
--recognize writing as a learning tool for personal growth and communiction with others.
--generate ways and means for expression, evaluation, and comprehension of written ideas.
--write for audience and purpose.
--adopt the techniques of writing that will appeal to others and a power of persuasion.
--develop their innate abilities for creativity and imagination.
--learn ways to recognize grammar and the mechanics of a manuscript form.

Goal (Speaking):

The skill of speaking is necessary for self-expression and interpretation and communication.

Objectives (Speaking):

Students should be able to:

--express and speak clearly their ideas and concerns.
--to adapt to situations and small and large group audiences.
--take an active part and interact in small and large groups.
--present in an orderly and convincing manner any arguments.
--assess the various kinds of interpretations which utilize speaking.

Goal (Listening):

Listening and observing are arts that rely on skills based upon the speaker's purpose and the message to be received.

Objectives (Listening):

The student should be able to:

--understand what speaker is saying.
--understand full detailed message.
--judge for himself the vehicles of communication.

4. Thinking Skills:

Premises:

Thinking and literature are closely linked and the capacity to solve problems will help students to succeed in other learning experiences. Thinking skills may be grouped in three major categories: creative thinking, critical thinking, and logical thinking.

Creative thinking is derived not from an innate talent, but from the individual unique perception. Creativity involves not only a passive but an active perception of the world.

Logical thinking involves defining a problem, designing solutions, and predicting outcomes.

Critical thinking should involve the asking of questions not only to discern meaning, but to discriminate between opinion and fact--including attempts to manipulate and deceive through language.

Goal:

Creative, logical, and critical thinking skills are inherent in the disciplines of reading, writing, speaking, listening and observing, contributing to the process of lifelong literacy for a meaningful life.

Creative Objectives:

Students should be able to:

--recognize that all individuals are unique and that the process of original thought depends upon the individual's perception.
--recognize that creative thinking involves the use of all five senses along with experience and perception for innovative ideas.

Logical Objectives:

Students should be able to:

--hypothesize and predict with a reasonable amount of accuracy.

--mentally process information for seeking out the truth in a logical manner from fallacies that are illogical.

Critical Objectives:

Students should be able to:

--discover new meaning through questions.
--see the difference between fact and opinion and between subjective and objective points of view.
--interpret the messages and intentions of speakers and writers in deciphering the truth.
--support and explain criteria based on valid judgment.

Exhibit C

ESSENTIALS OF ENGLISH

A Document for Reflection and Dialogue

National Council of Teachers of English

Essentials of English

The study of English includes knowledge of the language itself, development of its use as a basic means of communication, and appreciation of its artistry as expressed in literature. Teachers of English trace the origins of the language in the past, study its development in the present, and recognize that continuing change in the future will keep the language and the literature alive, flexible and adaptable to the highest expression of which the human being is capable.

The use of English involves skills in reading, writing, speaking, listening and observing. The development of these skills is a lifelong process. The extent to which they are developed can influence an individual's ability to become self-sufficient and lead a productive life.

LANGUAGE

Language is a subject worthy of study in itself, but language in use always exists in a setting involving people and situations. Language is a primary way individuals communicate what they think and feel. They find self-identity through language, shape their knowledge and experience by means of it, and depend upon it as a lifelong resource for expressing their hopes and feelings.

Children acquire language at an early stage and internalize much of its grammar through use before formal training in school begins. Continuing attention to language makes students aware how language functions and helps them control and use it in increasingly effective ways. Language is therefore basic to learning in all disciplines. Skillful use of language may be the single most important means of realizing the overarching goal of education to develop informed, thinking citizens.

By studying language, students should

- learn how the English language has developed, continues to change, and survives because it is adaptable to new times
- understand that varieties of English usage are shaped by social, cultural, and geographical differences

- recognize that language is a powerful tool for thinking and learning
- become aware how grammar represents the orderliness of language and makes meaningful communication possible
- recognize how context--topic, purpose, audience--influences the structure and use of language
- understand how language can act as a unifying force among the citizens of a nation

LITERATURE

Literature is the verbal expression of the human imagination and one of the primary means by which a culture transmits itself. The reading and study of literature add a special dimension to students' lives by broadening their insights, allowing them to experience vicariously places, people, and events otherwise unavailable to them, and adding delight and wonder to their daily lives.

Through their study and enjoyment of literature, students should

- realize the importance of literature as a mirror of human experience, reflecting human motives, conflicts, and values
- be able to identify with fictional characters in human situations as a means of relating to others; gain insights from involvement with literature
- become aware of important writers representing diverse backgrounds and traditions in literature
- become familiar with masterpieces of literature, both past and present
- develop effective ways of talking and writing about varied forms of literature
- experience literature as a way to appreciate the rhythms and beauty of the language
- develop habits of reading that carry over into adult life

COMMUNICATIONS SKILLS

Communication is language in action, by which individuals participate in the affairs of society through reading, writing, speaking, listening, and using electronic media. The study of

English develops fundamental communication skills that prepare students to engage in fluent and responsible communication and to analyze information that comes to them.

Reading

Students should

- recognize that reading functions in their lives as a pleasurable activity as well as a means of acquiring knowledge
- learn from the very beginning to approach reading as a search for meaning
- develop the necessary reading skills to comprehend material appearing in a variety of forms
- learn to read accurately and make valid inferences
- learn to judge literature critically on the basis of personal response and literary quality

Writing

Students should

- learn to write clearly and honestly
- recognize that writing is a way to learn and develop personally as well as a way to communicate with others
- learn ways to generate ideas for writing, to select and arrange them, to find appropriate modes for expressing them, and to evaluate and revise what they have written
- learn to adapt expression to various audiences
- learn the techniques of writing for appealing to others and persuading them
- develop their talents for creative and imaginative expression
- recognize that precision in punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and other elements of manuscipt form is a part of the total effectiveness of writing

Speaking

Students should learn

- to speak clearly and expressively about their ideas and concerns

- to adapt words and strategies according to varying situations and audiences, from one-to-one conversations to formal, large-group settings
- to participate productively and harmoniously in both small and large groups
- to present arguments in orderly and convincing ways
- to interpret and assess various kinds of communication, including intonation, pause, gesture, and body language that accompany speaking

Listening

Students should

- learn that listening with understanding depends on determining a speaker's purpose
- learn to attend to detail and relate it to the overall purpose of the communication
- learn to evaluate the messages and effects of mass communication

Using Media

Students should

- become aware of the impact of technology on communication and recognize that electronic modes such as recording, film, television, video-tape, and computers require special skills to understand their way of presenting information and experience
- realize that new modes of communication demand a new kind of literacy

THINKING SKILLS

Because thinking and language are closely linked, teachers of English have always held that one of their main duties is to teach students how to think. Thinking skills, involved in the study of all disciplines, are inherent in the reading, writing, speaking, listening and observing involved in the study of English. The ability to analyze, classify, compare, formulate hypotheses, make inferences, and draw conclusions is essential to the reasoning processes of all adults. The capacity to solve problems, both rationally and intuitively, is a way to help students cope successfully with the experience of learning within the school setting and outside. These skills may be grouped in three major categories.

Creative Thinking

Students should learn

- that originality derives from the uniqueness of the individual's perception, not necessarily from an innate talent
- that inventiveness involves seeing new relationships
- that creative thinking derives from their ability not only to look, but to see; not only to hear, but to listen; not only to imitate, but to innovate; not only to observe, but to experience the excitement of fresh perception

Logical Thinking

Students should learn

- to create hypotheses and predict outcomes
- to test the validity of an assertion by examining the evidence
- to understand logical relationships
- to construct logical sequences and understand the conclusions to which they lead
- to detect fallacies in reasoning
- to recognize that "how to think" is different from "what to think"

Critical Thinking

Students should learn

- to ask questions in order to discover meaning
- to differentiate between subjective and objective viewpoints; to discriminate between opinion and fact
- to evaluate the intentions and messages of speakers and writers, especially attempts to manipulate the language in order to deceive
- to make judgments based on criteria that can be supported and explained

THE RESPONSIBILITY OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH

The study of English offers varied opportunities for the individual to mature intellectually and emotionally. We believe in basic competency in English as a means by which the individual can acquire self-sufficiency and work independently in all disciplines. We believe further in challenges to both the analytical and creative capabilities of our students.

Toward accomplishing these aims, we as teachers of English hold ourselves responsible for

- helping all students become literate and capable of functioning in an increasingly complex society
- directing them to read and view materials appropriate to their abilities and interests
- encouraging them to exchange ideas, listen perceptively, and discuss vigorously
- urging them to write honestly in the spirit of open inquiry
- helping them expand their interests and reach their fullest potential through language

By contributing in these ways, we hope to expand the capacities of the human intellect and to preserve the tradition of free thought in a democratic society.

Exhibit D

LITERACY STATEMENTS FOR THE STATE OF MICHIGAN

developed by a joint committee of

The Michigan Council of Teachers of English
The Michigan Association of Speech Communication
The Michigan Reading Association
with support from
The Michigan Council for the Humanities
1985

PREFACE

The Michigan Association of Speech Communication (MASC), the Michigan Council of Teachers of English (MCTE) and the Michigan Reading Association (MRA) have joined together to address issues which are of mutual concern in advancing literacy in Michigan.

Education in Michigan draws its strength from local control. The ability of communities to make decisions which serve educational needs has been proven by student accomplishments. These student accomplishments reflect the support of the following:

- Parents who have shared their visions and wishes for their children's education and who continue to work with teachers and community leaders to assure quality educational programs in their schools
- Legislators who have made education a high priority in the State of Michigan
- Educators who have transferred the best of current instructional theory into effective classroom instruction

The continued advancement of Michigan education requires increasing cooperation of students, parents, legislators and educators, each assuming appropriate roles in literacy education.

STATEMENT ON LITERACY

Traditionally, literacy has been viewed as only reading and writing, but that view fragments the wholeness of language learning. A contemporary view of literacy recognizes the interdependence of listening, speaking, reading and writing. The Michigan Association of Speech Communication (MASC), the Michigan Council of Teachers of English (MCTE) and the Michigan Reading Association (MRA) ascribe to a philosophy of integrated language learning which defines literacy as competence in listening, speaking, reading and writing.

MASC, MCTE and MRA agree to promote their common interests and perspectives on literacy.

Literacy Statement I

The School Curriculum

Students must continuously develop their abilities to communicate in order to function as literate members of society. Specific course offerings in the communication skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing are essential components of a curriculum that promotes literacy.

The issue of literacy should be addressed throughout the curriculum. Therefore, to promote literacy, we recommend three curriculum proposals.

I. Instruction and experiences in communication processes must be incorporated into all content areas. For example, instruction includes:

   A. activities to promote speaking and listening for a variety of purposes and in a variety of educational and social settings.
   B. formal and informal listening and speaking instruction into all units of study.
   C. oral language activities as an integral part of the writing and reading processes in all content areas.
   D. writing activities in all areas of study.
   E. activities which promote reading for a variety of purposes and which promote reading a variety of materials in all areas of study.
   F. activities to assist students in reading specific content material for specific purposes.

II. Courses in print and non-print media should be offered to allow students to develop higher level thinking and communicating skills. Specialized study should be offered in listening, speaking, reading and writing.

III. To insure quality instruction, teachers of courses in the communication processes must be specifically certified and qualified to teach in those disciplines.

Literacy Statement II

Testing and Assessment

The measurement of learning is extremely complex. Because perceptions of this complexity vary among and within lay and professional groups, testing as a measurement of learning has

definite limitations. Because of these limitations, abuses of testing have occurred:

Decision-making about students and school programs relies too heavily on formal test results.

Too much instructional time is used for test-taking and for the preparation, administration, scoring and interpretation of tests.

Goals for instruction are limited because of the narrow range of language competencies measured by the tests.

Simple testing formats are used for measuring complex language competencies. These tests usually measure what students will or can do in a testing situation, not what they will or can do in real-life situations.

A large portion of limited funds for instruction is used for tests.

Therefore, to promote literacy, we recommend three testing and assessment proposals.

A. School district policies on testing should be locally developed.

B. Both teacher-developed measures and standardized assessment devices should be used to make curriculum decisions, to assess student progress, and to assign students to particular classes.

C. The use of test results should not be the sole criterion for program funding.

Literacy Statement III

Graduation Requirements

The communication skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing are learned and refined throughout life. Furthermore, teachers working with parents and local school administrators, are in the best position to plan, assess and monitor students' educational development in communication skills. Therefore, to promote literacy, we recommend two graduation requirement proposals.

A. Michigan high school students should pass a minimum of four years of communication skills courses.

B. Graduation requirements should continue to be determined by local school districts.

Literacy Statement IV

Preparation and Certification of Professional Educators

Enhancing the quality of education requires improved standards of certification and recertification. Collective efforts to develop these standards should involve teacher education institutions, professional organizations, public schools and the community. Therefore, to promote literacy, we recommend four proposals for the professional preparation and certification of educators.

A. Criteria for teacher preparation courses should include the following:

1. Communication skills course work taught by specialists in the teaching of listening, speaking, reading and writing
2. Frequent opportunities to read, write, and speak
3. Methods for teaching integrated communication skills
4. Study of child development and language development

B. Criteria for continuing certification of teachers should include the following:

1. Participation in professional conferences
2. Participation in classroom research initiated by oneself or others
3. Participation in locally developed workshops and seminars
4. Participation in graduate level courses and study for advance degrees

C. Criteria for recertification of teachers should include the following:

1. Methodology of instruction appropriate for the skill and teaching level
2. Information about application of communication skills in content areas
3. Continuous education throughout one's teaching career

D. Criteria for certification of building administrators should include the following:

1. Teacher certification and five years of teaching experience at the grade configuration they administer
2. Administrative certification at the grade configuration they administer
3. Academic preparation which includes a minimum of one course in the design and development of communication skills curricula

Literacy Statement V

Professional Growth and Development

Teachers have a continuing need for current knowledge in the theory and practice of communiation skills. This is especially important for teachers who have not received extensive training in communication skills and for teachers who find themselves assigned to teach outside their primary areas of expertise. Teachers, administrators, school boards, colleges, parents, the State Department of Education and professional organizations share the responsibility for professional growth and development programs.

However, in-depth professional growth opportunities for developing teacher competencies cannot be accomplished simply or easily. Therefore, to promote literacy, we recommend two professional growth and development proposals.

A. In order to support teachers' professional growth in communication skills, local school districts should provide for and expect the following:

1. Teachers to take an active part in their own professional growth
2. A school climate which encourages and supports professional growth and development
3. Current professional libraries and professional library services
4. Announcements for new resources in the communication skills areas
5. Work areas for the development of teaching materials
6. Lists of current materials
7. Release time with pay for school faculty to provide inservice in other school districts
8. Release time, continuing education funding, part or full time sabbaticals and minigrants or tuition reimbursement
9. Inservice sessions in the communication skills conducted by skilled faculty members or local and state experts recommended by communication skills organizations
10. Encouragement to join professional organizations which address the concerns of communication skills and financial support for teachers to attend conferences of those professional organizations
11. Recognition for teachers who participate in professional growth and development programs and conferences and for teachers who implement their learnings in the classroom

B. In order to support administrators' professional growth in communication skills, local school districts should provide for and expect the following:

1. Administrators to take an active part in their own professional growth

2. Administrators to discuss communication skills workshops, conferences or graduate courses with their teachers
3. Administrators to discuss communication skills issues with their teachers
4. Administrators to participate in professional organizations which promote communication skills instruction in schools
5. Release time with pay for school administrators to provide inservice in other school districts
6. Release time, continuing education funding, part or full time sabbaticals and mini-grants or tuition reimbursement

Exhibit E

ESL IN THE HIGH SCHOOL ENGLISH CURRICULUM

Marcellette G. Williams
Michigan State University

Equity and educational opportunity for the limited English proficient student poses an exciting challenge for writers of high school English curricula, for here English is both subject matter, not only as a second language but also as native language study of language and literature, and the language of instruction for all other courses in the curriculum usually including even foreign language courses. A major component for any plan supporting academic excellence must address the needs of an ever growing language minority population. That in 1955 white English-speaking majorities constituted 24 of the country's largest school districts, and by 1980 that number had dwindled to 2 strongly indicates a trend having far reaching implications in not only curriculum design but also for teacher preparation.

A consideration of ESL in the context of foreign or second language study usually promotes more effective programs than does a view which places ESL in the context of remediation. The difference between "second" and "foreign" language is crucial here: in a "second" language setting the language is both language subject matter and the language of instruction of all courses in the curriculum; in a "foreign" language setting the language is language subject matter but is not the language of instruction of other courses in the curriculum often including even the language course itself.

A statement from a 1973 meeting of the Joint National Committee for Languages (a committee of representatives of 29 major language associations including the classics, English as a second language, and the less commonly taught languages) and the Council for Languages and Other International Studies declared in part:

> "Those who are not proficient in English should be provided the opportunity and encouragement to become so, since English is the key to gaining an accurate, broad perspective on American life, to obtaining equality of educational, economic, social and political opportunity, and those who are proficient only in English should have the opportunity and should be encouraged to achieve proficiency in other languages and to know and appreciate the history and culture of other peoples. It is through the knowledge of languages and cultures that we best begin to know and comprehend the scope and significance of human experience in history, from ancient times to modern; it is through the knowledge of languages and

> cultures that we best learn to tolerate and appreciate culture and linguistic diversity at home, to understand our contemporaries abroad, and to achieve our full potential as citizens of the world. (TN, XVIII, No. 1, p. 5)

In September, 1983, on Sanibel Island, Florida, representatives from the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, the Joint National Committee for Languages, the National Association for Bilingual Education, and Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages drafted the Sanibel Statement, not a language policy but a statement of principles on which its authors believe any action taken to encourage language study should be based. It reads in part:

> ". . . Whereas the United States of America must increasingly encounter and function within linguistic and culturally different contexts, nationally and internationally;
> Whereas the United States of America is and has been, by its history and tradition of openness to immigration, a multilingual multicultural society providing opportunities for a new life as well as refuge from political, religious and economic oppression abroad;
> Whereas English is the dominant language of the United States of America, other languages and cultures exist in the land as viable and significant resoruces deserving respect, preservation and enhancement;
> . . . Now, therefore be it resolved by this group assembled here at Sanibel Island, Florida, that the United States of America, as a multilingual multicultural society, strive to nurture and advance the human and legal rights of individuals of all languages and cultural backgrounds.
> Be it further resolved, that national, state, and local governments provide all who reside in the United States of America whose primary language is not English maximum opportunity to learn to function in English, the dominant language of the land.
> Be it also resolved, that national, state, and local governments provide all who reside in the United States of America, whether they be native or non-native speakers of English, maximum opportunity to learn to function in languages other than English. (TN, XVII, No. 2, p. 4)

Attention must also clearly be given to the curriculum itself. Presumably, the objectives, text selection, program implementation, and evolution will be largely the responsibility of an instructional staff who have appropriate professional preparation and experience for the duties assigned them. The curriculum will indicate expected learner outcomes in the various instructional (skills) areas. Both methods and materials will be appropriate to age, language, proficiency level, and student needs, all considerations consistent with the goals of the broader curriculum. A quality ESL curriculum has a systematic implementation progressing from assessment to instruction to evaluation to review and finally to revision. Initial assessment is crucial in dictating placement, approach, and materials used for a given student.

For the non-ESL classroom teacher with non-native English speakers in class there are helpful considerations. A heightened awareness of some general characteristics of natural language acquisition is requisite.

1. Children acquire each new language skill gradually; what we observe is comprehension prior to production. That ESL students understand before they are able to demonstrate that understanding in academically acceptable spoken or written language is a decided strength that, when acknowledged and encouraged, contributes immensely to a more rapid acquisition of good speaking skills.

2. ESL students are mastering skills in at least two languages simultaneously. Our ESL students benefit from knowing that we know this fact of complex interaction of language that doesn't lend itself to isolation and mastery of one component skill before proceding with another.

3. Children learn languages without needing to learn about it. Contexts rich in syntactic and semantic relationships encourage the rapid expansion of vocabulary. Opportunities to identify, hear, and use restatement and paraphrase are effective.

4. Hearing the target language in situationally appropriate contexts encourages understanding and use by language learners in situations that make their meaning clear. A teacher's presentation should include more contextually supportive repetition to reinforce the relationship between meaning and form.

5. Although our students learn to understand a variety of speech patterns, the one they choose to imitate or adapt will reflect their need or desire to identify with a particular peer group. That they understand the variation is a fact to be celebrated, and if our focus is on meaning and its articulation in socially (contextually) appropriate situations, then have we assured a rich environment for language acquisition.

There are several ways for the non-ESL classroom teacher to keep even minimally current with techniques and strategies that will help the ever increasing language minority population become more quickly proficient in English. For example, among the benefits provided by individual or institutional membership in International TESOL are the quarterly and 6 yearly 20 + page newsletters. The quarterly, the more theoretical of the two, provides the most current information and research in all the foundations of ESOL, and the newsletter has several sections that translate that research into effective classroom application, giving techniques for use at all age and language proficiency levels. In addition, the latest in texts and materials is presented and reviewed.

Making a commitment to equity and excellence in our schools, specifically with regard to our non-native English speaking population, need not be a formidable task. Rather, an application of our development of an understanding of second language acquisition can help us meet the challenge of designing a more richly textured English language and literature curriculum addressing and complementing the needs of both non-native and native speakers of English.

Exhibit F

A SYNOPSIS ON MINORITY GROUPS

Ruperto Rodriguez

The content of English Curriculum should include the contributions of minority groups in our society, and it should be taught in varied learning capsules. It is, therefore, important to bring the English classroom into focus as the central core for the distribution and assimilation of cultural materials. Thus, as educators we can foster the good will of our fellow men and perpetuate the ideals of a multicultural curriculum, but unified people.

To accomplish this, assignments should lead to research on minority peoples, customs, holidays and festivals. Field trips to ethnic community events, such as the Tulip Festival, Polaski Day, Martin Luther King and Mexico's Independence Day are avenues to compile a wealth of information for oral and written reports.

The introduction of pen pals among English classes, both within and outside of the school district, are other possibilities to increase an awareness of cultural similarities and differences. This type of cultural exchange program will provide the students of different backgrounds the opportunity to communicate outside of their surroundings. Perhaps a "friendship day" at the end of a semester or the school year would be an appropriate time for the pen pals to meet. It should be a day of festivity with targeted activities, such as guest speakers, ethnic foods, plays, songs, etc.

Through a dedicated effort to incorporate minority groups in the study of English, we can make definite inroads to welcome them and their cultures. In turn, the student from a minority cultural background will be able to feel a purpose for remaining in school and an involvement with his studies because of his feeling of acceptance in the total society. Our English classes need to provide him with heroes of minority beginnings for self identification and role models similar to his own experiences. As the student becomes increasingly aware of his ethnic contributions to society, he should feel more comforatable and determined to succeed.

The classroom is a proper place to broaden the student's perspective on minority peoples for a bond of tolerance and understanding. It should also enable him to function in the "real world" more effectively.

Another byproduct is the student's feedback to his home environment. Discussions of classroom activities at home might be the catalyst for his parents, relatives and friends to inspire and kindle their interest in English and its attributes.

Finally, we must realize a complete English curriculum where the community, teachers and administrators are committed to bring the minority groups into the mainstream of America. They must be dedicated, supportive people with words and deeds. It is only through concrete effort and concern of educators that we can make America the Beautiful a living reality for all of its inhabitants.

Exhibit G

NCTE "CENTERS OF EXCELLENCE"

NCTE Public Information Office

In the belief that many excellent teaching programs exist today in U.S. schools, the National Council of Teachers of English is mounting a nationwide search for such programs. A task force headed by Skip Nicholson, teacher of English at South Pasadena High School, California, developed the NCTE plan for identifying, recognizing, and publicizing exemplary programs for teaching many aspects of English language arts. NCTE will invite schools to send the task force brief descriptions of programs they consdier exemplary. The panel will then identify programs to be examined in detail, send validators to visit these programs, and subsequently cite those judged to be outstanding as Centers of Excellence. Schools whose programs are honored would agree to share their ideas in writing and enable other school leaders to visit their programs.

Schools may nominate their entire English language arts program or an aspect of that program, for example:

Curriculum: cross-disciplinary programs (such as humanities), drama/media, integrated language arts, journalism and student publications, language across the curriculum, literature (such as American, minority and world), oral language, student evaluation, language study, reading, writing, and developing thinking skills

Articulation: K-12, school-college, and preschool-primary

School, Staff, and Administration: administrative and structural support programs (including supervisor/department head programs), community involvement programs, library/media center support programs, parent-teacher-student communication programs, public relations programs, staff development and teacher-helping-teacher programs

Special Students: English as a second language programs, gifted and advanced placement programs, mainstreaming programs, and remedial/basic skills programs

Complete instructions for proposing an English language arts program for consideration as a Center for Excellence will be mailed to interested schools upon request.

For further information, write Centers of Excellence in English and the Language Arts, NCTE, 1111 Kenyon Road, Urbana, Illinois 61801.

Exhibit H

**QUESTIONS FOR CURRICULUM EVALUATION:
BEFORE AND AFTER CURRICULUM REVISION**

Stephen Tchudi, Explorations in Teaching English
(New York: Harper & Row, 1981)

1. Does the curriculum have a clearly stated, specific philosophy or theory of instruction?
2. Does the theory of instruction grow from observation and research into the growth and development of young people?
3. Does the philosophy reflect current, "state of the art" theory and research on language learning?
4. Do course and curriculum objectives grow from the philosophy so that they are consistent with it?
5. If a common core of objectives is supplied by either the school district or the state, do the objectives go beyond mere basics to encompass the full range of language activities?
6. Do common objectives leave room for indvidiual teachers to develop courses around the individual needs of their students?
7. Does the curriculum reflect the expressed concerns and interests of parents and other community members?
8. Does the curriculum reflect the stated interests and concerns of the students?
9. Does the curriculum provide opportunities for students to assume some responsibility for their own education?
10. Do the courses or instructional units integrate the language arts rather than isolating them as separte components, that is, reading, literature, writing, skills?
11. Are students encouraged to read and write in a wide variety of discourse forms?
12. Are oral language activities--speaking, listening, dramatics, role playing--an integral part of language arts courses and units?
13. Are contemporary media--film, television, radio--a natural part of English work?
14. Does the curriculum include provisions for interdisciplinary work, either within English courses or through interdepartmental units and courses?
15. Does the curriculum make connections with the "real" world through community-based activities?
16. Does the curriculum directly or indirectly state or imply a concern for lifelong literacy?
17. Is the curriculum fully multicultural?
18. Does the curriculum pattern (e.g., grade-level English, electives, self-contained classroom) provide for sequence, growth, articulation, and natural relationships from one course or unit to another?
19. Does the curriculum provide for evaluation and assessment, both of students and the curriculum itself?
20. Does the curriculum provide for and encourage its own evolution?

Exhibit I

SELECTING INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

From "Selecting Instructional Materials," written by James W. Sabol on behalf of the Secondary Section Committee of the National Council of Teachers of English, The English Journal, January 1977, pp. 9-14. Abridged and adapted. For the statements in item 4, Sabol credits the 1973-74 Resource Guide to Reading and Language Arts Programs (New York: MacMillan, 1973) and NCTE Guide to Teaching Materials for English 7-12 (Urbana: National Council of Teachers of English, 1976).

1. Identifying the Participants

Identify the persons who have an interest in and a right to participate in the business of selecting instructional materials:

Parents	Taxpayers
Students	Teachers
Principals	Superintendents
Supervisors	Board Members

2. Defining the Needs

Define the needs for instructional materials from responses to certain questions?

What curricular goals are some students not now achieving?
What students are not being served by the present instructional materials?
What materials, demonstrably helpful in meeting certain goals, need replacing?
What course changes, to better meet certain goals, could be made with new instructional materials?
What learning processes could be improved with new or different instructional materials?

3. Establishing the Interplay Among the Components of Setting

Relate selection of materials to district statement of philosophy and goals.
Identify religious, cultural, ethnic considerations.
Specify applicable state laws and regulations.
Identify local criteria and process lists.
Record steps of compliance with district policies.
Review conflict of interest codes.

4. Making the Selection

Provide for each selection:

A statement of title, author, publishing company, price, publication data, number ordered.
Names, titles of recommending individuals, groups, committees, reviewers, tryer-outers, approval granters.
Means by which this selection is recommended: need statement, rationale, student responses, parent recommendations, results of tryout ratings
Identification of students, grade levels, for whom the selection is intended, restrictions on use.
Program goals, learning processes, modes, and objectives this selection will serve.
All applicable laws and regulations, as well as long-range plans considered in making this selection.
Sources of professional legitimacy for your selection.

5. Follow Through

Develop and carry through processes and procedures for:

Orderly distribution and inventory.
Initial and replacement cost records.
Storage and access.
In-service education.
Information and sample copies available to parents.
Evaluation and appraisal based upon student performance.
Citizen and professional staff requests for reconsideration.
Regular review for obsolescence.

Exhibit J

MCTE EXEMPLARY WRITING PROGRAM APPLICATION

Directions: Please write a paragraph or more about each of the four major areas identified below by Roman numerals. Consider the commentary and questions under each heading as general guidelines for composing your answer; your responses need not be limited to these matters, nor must they include all of them. Your complete response, however, should not exceed two typewritten pages, single-spaced. For information on deadlines, write:

MCTE
P. O. Box 892
929 Center Drive
Rochester, Michigan 48308

I. Indicate how your writing program has made writing a particularly important activity in your school.

When you respond to this item, you might first provide evidence that writing is especially important to your students. Their in-class and extracurricular writing activities or projects would be indications of such interest, as would active membership in organizations or clubs. Too, is there evidence that writing is also important to the teachers and other adults connected with your school? To what degree, for example, is writing used as a teaching and learning tool in all content areas? What provisions have been made to meet the needs of special students in writing? Has writing been integrated with the other communication skills, such as reading and discussion? Have community members been involved in your writing program, perhaps as speakers or scribes?

This part of your discussion might also indicate what has been done to encourage parents to understand and actively support the goals and methods of your program.

II. Describe how your writing program focusses on the entire writing process, from prewriting through development and revision to evaluation by an audience.

In this part of your response, please indicate what you see as the strengths of your program in teaching the entire writing process. For example, you might describe the various prewriting experiences and activities used in your school to help students generate writing topics and materials. You might also indicate how classroom environments stimulate writing activities. Part of your discussion might focus on the types of writing done by students in your school (narratives, journals, editorials, etc.); another part could indicate how, in addition to editing for mechanics, the other

aspects and techniques of revision are taught as part of your program. Finally, you might describe how the students in your school are encouraged and enabled to share their writing with a variety of audiences.

III. Describe how your writing program is coordinated and evaluated.

In this part of your response, you might discuss such things as the standards that have been established concerning the quality of student writing, the objectives of your writing program, and how your program is designed to include all grade levels in a coordinated fashion. If possible, you should also indicate how students' writing growth is measured and what evidence of such growth are part of each student's permanent record.

IV. Describe how ongoing professional development in the teaching of writing is provided for the teachers in your program.

In this part of your response, you might indicate how your teachers have learned about teaching the writing process, as well as how they keep abreast of current research in the teaching of writing (professional associations, conferences, etc.). How and to what degree is such continuing education encouraged? In this regard you might also describe your building's professional library in terms of its resources for teachers who, regardless of their area, are interested in improving the writing of their students. Too, you might discuss the role played by the staff in the planning and evaluation of the writing program. A final focus of this part of your response might be the future: what problems are you continuing to work on and what steps are planned to make yours an even stronger writing program?

It is understood that applications for the MCTE EXEMPLARY WRITING PROGRAM may be published in the Michigan English Teacher. Would you be willing to share your writing program with visitors from other districts?

Have you planned any workshops which persons outside your building could attend? (Please specify.)

Exhibit K

CONDITIONS AND STRATEGIES FOR EFFECTIVE ENGLISH CURRICULUM CHANGE

Betty Swiggett
Hampton, Virginia, Public Schools

1. Expertise power: It helps immensely to have leaders who know what they believe about good English curriculum. Curriculum committees are usually looking for direction. Leaders active in English professional organizations are usually informed of the "state of the art." Consultants of national repute can be of tremendous help if their beliefs about language and schooling are compatible with those of the local English leadership. When national consultants support local leadership, the combined expertise power paves the way for sound curricular decisions.

2. Personal power: The status of the individuals or organization attempting to effect curriculum change is extremely important. Persons known to produce quality work are more easily trusted when they advocate new directions.

3. Manageable committee structure: Although some curriculum decisions are best achieved by a committee with representation from all involved groups, curriculum writing, however, must remain the domain of the English teachers.

4. Information campaign: Committee minutes, pertinent professional articles, television programs (many schools have their own), newspaper articles (in-school and local papers), videotape programs, and sending committee members to conferences all serve to educate administrators, teachers, and the general public. Use every avenue available. Be assertive rather than reactionary. When important decisions are at stake, those who care the most develop creative energy, which is a powerful message in itself.

5. Time and Funding: Good curriculum requires times for planning and for writing. Committees cannot produce instant curricula; nor can they function effectively without relevant time for study and comtemplation as well as curriculum writing. Funding is important. Individual teachers can change without much funding, but major city-wide curriculum change requires adequate funding to bring the larger body of teachers into curriculum change.

6. Inservice: Professional development is an ongoing process. Real change for some comes only after the new concepts and practices are presented many times in a variety of ways.

7. Interdisciplinary Efforts: Writing to learn, reading to learn, and small-group strategies, along with interdisciplinary units, have galvanized teachers into understanding that change is for real. As you reach beyond the discipline of English to other disciplines, you assert the importance of such concepts as language to learn and small-group work.

8. Support of top administrators: You can accomplish more in less time with the support of top administrators. Keep them informed. Write letters and brochures directed to them. Even with the most difficult of administrators, sheer information bombardment helps, especially when it comes from various sources.

9. Support of guidance staff: Arrange to meet face-to-face with the guidance staff to explain the aims and contents of curriculum change. Resistance to new programs usually starts within the school.